

the people serve them, Bryan served the people. I had rather have my name imperishably linked as his is, with those great reforms in the interest of all the people than to have history tell that I occupied the presidential chair. For Jefferson stated it best of all when he went to write his own epitaph; he never told of what mankind had done for him, that they had elected him president, vice president, member of congress, governor of Virginia, that was what they had done for him. He preferred that he should leave upon the shaft above his grave those things he had done for them, and he wrote: "Author of the Declaration of Independence and the statutes of Virginia for religious liberty, and founder of the University of Virginia."

GEORGE FRED WILLIAMS' SPEECH

In his closing speech, Mr. Bryan made the following reference to Mr. Williams: If Senator Pettigrew has shown bravery in overcoming the conservatism of a New England birth and of membership in the republican party, how much more courage has it required for George Fred Williams to make the fight he has without leaving New England! For nearly sixteen years he has defied an environment that has closed the lips of a multitude of men less courageous and has been the outspoken champion of the interests of the average man. He has stood resolute and unafraid among a gain-saying people until there are signs of wholesale advance in his section of the land. His speech has been the treat of a lifetime; he illustrates how learning can enlarge one's capacity for service when inspired by a heart that beats in sympathy with the heart of mankind.

George Fred Williams, of Massachusetts, spoke as follows:

All the deeds and words of men who have stood for human liberty have been embalmed in history; the descendants of these patriots trace out with pride a glorious ancestry while the bourbons and tories have bestowed no legacies of honor upon their progeny.

Yet in their day and generation, these pioneers in human progress did not dream of the honors with which history would crown their memories. We of the present, moved hither and thither by the perplexities, the doubts and the uncertainties of our daily efforts, do not realize that we too are making history; yet it may be that in all the records of the human struggle for justice and liberty, no era will hereafter be studied with more veneration than the closing of the last century and the opening of the new.

Our forefathers builded upon a single foundation on which alone the fabric of our republic must stand or fall, the principle of popular sovereignty. It is not surprising, amid the doubts and fears of a new experiment, that the framers of our government should have applied this principle with caution. The most sagacious were uncertain whether the executive, judicial or legislative power might, under the trials of time, prove a menace to human freedom. They hedged about the election of a president with an electoral college lest he might become a king. Their fears of the full operation of the sovereign will were reflected in the appointment and life tenure of judges and in the selection of senators by the legislatures of the respective states. To the efforts of the fathers is due the highest meed of praise, but it should be recorded as our shame if in a century and a quarter of practical experience we had not discovered methods of reconstruction by which our institutions may be made stronger and more durable.

New problems have arisen with new conditions. The giant development of wealth is the new menace to the welfare of mankind. In the process of uncontrolled development of wealth, it appears clear that its distribution has rested upon a basis not only false but dangerous. Individual fortunes which have not been equalled even in the dreams of the past, now rear themselves above our people, while more and more the masses of men are feeling their terrible drain upon human resources. The vastness of wealth and the vastness of poverty yawn alike before us.

This is the great problem of the day and patriots are as much needed for its solution by peaceable and lawful methods as they were needed in arms to throw off the rule of a despotic monarch.

This centralizing wealth has, decade after decade, strengthened its hold upon our government, the politics of the people, the press, the pulpit, the bar, industry, commerce, finance, and regulates indeed all the currents of our civilization. For this condition individuals can not be made responsible. No one man, like an Alexander, a Caesar or a Napoleon, has lifted this mighty sceptre of wealth above the republic.

The responsibility lies with the system rather than with men, and our institutions must be searched, rather than human motives, for the ascertainment of the structural defect.

The first essential fact which has fixed itself in the public mind is that any class or element which possesses the governing power will inevitably govern in its own interest. The second essential fact is that monopoly has seized upon all the branches of our government and is operating them relentlessly for its own ends.

It is in itself a vindication of popular sovereignty that while statesmen halt appalled at the impending danger, the people are already applying a specific remedy. This remedy is the final and unqualified application of popular sovereignty to our political, social and economic institutions.

The so-called checks and balances against the exercise of the popular will are now one and all under attack. So tremendous is this movement in our politics that it has invaded and threatens to split in twain the party through which organized wealth has fastened itself upon our government.

There came a day when the heartlessness of plutocracy was bearing down with cruel force upon the people. Through control over the measure of values the creditor class threatened to absorb in hopeless bankruptcy the debtors of the nation who were the main producers of its wealth. As elsewhere in human history, the agony of suffering opened the eyes of men to the truth, and a despairing people cried out painfully for help.

In a political convention, which for the first time in a generation could not be bought, sold, terrified or cajoled one of the greatest revolutions in the annals of human liberty was opened.

The new order demanded new men, and as the despairing Elsa in face of death called from the skies her mighty champion, so now a distressed republic did not appeal in vain for a leader. Here, upon the plains of Nebraska, the champion was found, the manner of man needed for such leadership as if divinely ordained; pure of heart, masterful in intellect, his words winged with inspiration, possessed of devotion incarnate, a consecrated faith in human destiny and the justice of God, he placed himself at the battle's front, and at that hour the stone sank into the forehead of the Philistine.

I venture the assertion that in the annals of liberty the 19th day of July, 1896, will not stand second even to the 4th day of July, 1776; and upon a like plane of human gratitude shall rest the names of Jefferson and Bryan.

It is true, the declarations of that platform were but the shadow of the reality to come, but four new ideas were born that day which have now attained their youth and are ripening into manhood. First, that the control of the monetary supply may be the instrument of terrible oppression; second, that the avenues of commerce belong to the people; third, that delegate bodies should not be entrusted with the election of public officers; and, fourth, that all the departments of government should be responsive to the popular will.

Never in the history of politics has an axiomatic principle been more brazenly denied than was our assertion that the quantity of money determines the price level of commodities. The falsity of this denial is now admitted even by the journals of Wall street which point to the increasing price level as the reflection of an increasing monetary supply. So blind are the masters of finance to the development of popular opinion that they are now even spending money by the hundreds of thousands dollars to convince the people that the bankers of the country and not the government should control the money of the people. But out of the teachings of 1896 we confront the so-called Aldrich currency measure with the assertion that the people and the people alone, through their government, must control the volume of money.

The convention of 1896 gave life to the interstate commerce law, until then a dead letter, and it has now become an accepted policy of all political factions, that the people themselves shall dominate the avenues of commerce.

The third article of faith expounded at Chicago was the popular election of United States senators. The people had seen this august body converted from an aristocracy of intellect into a headquarters of plutocracy. The corruption of legislatures became the rule rather than the exception and the people have seen plainly how the hand of wealth can be laid with irresistible force upon delegate bodies.

But it is upon the fourth issue that public sentiment has most marvelously developed in the last fifteen years. There is one lesson which, above all others, plutocracy has taught in its

press, at its bar, in its universities, and from its bench, namely, that the judiciary, one of the three departments of government, should be independent of the popular will. I need not recall with what wrath and foaming at the mouth that plank in the Chicago platform was denounced which criticized a decision of the supreme court and intimated that means must be found to change the decision; the reason of it was that plutocracy relied upon the bench as its final entrenchment against popular attack, and it must at all hazards suppress this first insurrectionary utterance. Like Jack's bean stalk, this idea has grown until it has become the settled conviction of a majority of our people that the judiciary should not, any more than the other departments of government, be beyond the reach of the sovereign will.

Upon these four Chicago declarations has been based the great popular movement for the assertion of the people's sovereignty. The party which has for a half century placed our government at the service of monopoly has been penetrated by the wedge of these ideas and a contingent of thoughtful, courageous and patriotic republicans has demanded the acceptance of that party of the inevitable popular verdict.

La Follette is as much the birth of the Chicago convention as was Bryan himself, for without Bryan, La Follette and his rank of insurgents would have been impossible; we welcome them as our off-spring. Nor would I discourage any man who proclaims our principles and seeks their leadership. Yet it belongs to us, who have forged these political weapons, to sound the motives of those who seize upon them at the eleventh hour, when ambition finds them needful.

Tacitus remarked with keen satire upon a distinguished Roman, "he would have been regarded by all as fit to be emperor, if he had not been emperor;" and we may be pardoned if for our own party and for the progressive ranks of our opponents we insist upon leaders who need no apology for the failures and errors of their past.

Fundamentally we may say that the institution which has broken down under the influence of wealth in our republic is the delegate system, and the entire march of progress is toward its correction. It is this institution of which wealth has possessed itself from the earliest to the latest stages. First, it has taken control of the party organizations; it has created the boss and his lobbies; he it is who has dominated the caucus, controlled convention delegates, buying, selling, intimidating and cajoling, while he has manipulated the party machinery ruthlessly to his ends. It has proven impossible to drive out the gray wolves from either organization; hence the determined popular movement to replace delegate conventions with the direct primary through which the people shall have full power over their nominations and elections.

The recreancy of the party organization to its promises has become too evident. A democratic senator of the United States has sneered at the binding nature of platform pledges; in the last year four governors have denounced their state legislatures for refusal to redeem party pledges. In Maine the democratic party refused to enact a direct primary law, which the people forthwith adopted under the power of the initiative by a vote of more than three to one; twice in eight years by advisory votes of five to one and three to one the voters of Illinois have demanded of their legislature the initiative and referendum, and successive legislatures have defied the popular will.

These breaches of party faith and legislative honesty have demonstrated the necessity for direct control by the people of their politics, legislation and public servants. The tool of wealth is money; and we must speedily follow our statutes against corrupt practices with the payment of all election expenses by the state and the disqualification of all candidates who violate the election laws.

When popular sovereignty shall be realized no public functionary will be invested with irrevocable power. Legislatures will proceed as before with the enactment of laws but subject to popular veto. If they fail to respond to the public demand, the people will enact their own laws at the polls. Executive, administrative, and judicial officers will be subject to the popular will through the exercise of the recall.

It was a gain to the people when in England the law judges were relieved from the dominion of the king who held sovereign power. But in this country the sovereign and the people are the same, and any department of government which is not subject to the popular will is a device for minority government, an aristocratic feature which must be cautiously and judiciously